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BETRAYAL

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STAN LEE presents:

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE

PART 4 OF 6

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HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW? I'M A CAR THIEF, NOT A DOCTOR.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT A BOMB WENT OFF UNDER THE GUY, AND NOW HE ISN'T MOVING OR BREATHING.
HOW THE HECK ARE WE GOING TO GET HIM OUT OF HERE?
VIP
WHAT WAS THAT?
CROAT SNIPERS WITH A MAD-ON FOR MUTANTS, I THINK. MAN, HOW DOES THAT BALD-HEADED CRANK IN THE WHEELCHAIR TALK US INTO THIS STUFF, CYCLOPS?
NIPS
OH MY GOD!
THPP!

CYCLOPS?
HE'S DOWN, STORM. THE LOCALS JUST PUT A BULLET IN HIS CHEST, AND NOW THEY'RE GUNNING FOR ME.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? NOBODY EVER COVERED CYCLOPS BEING DEAD IN THE DANGER ROOM EXERCISES.
STAY COOL, ICEMAN.
WHY DO YOU THINK GOD CREATED KEVLAR?
COLOSSUS, HOW FAST CAN YOU GET TO STORM AND BEAST?
WE NEED TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE OTHERS BEFORE MAGNETO SPOTS THE WIDE-SCREEN PYROTECHNICS.

PIOTR'S ALREADY *HERE*, CYCLOPS, BUT I DOUBT EVEN *HE'S* GOING TO BE ABLE TO HOLD THE LOCALS BACK MUCH LONGER.

I'M TRYING TO RUSTLE UP SOMETHING *NASTY* TO HIT THEM WITH.

I'M JUST SO *STRESSED*.

ALL I'VE MANAGED SO FAR IS A LITTLE *LIGHT SLEET*.

SO MUCH FOR RESCUING THE PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER BUYING US *BROWNIE POINTS* WITH THE HUMAN RACE.

THEY HATE US, CYCLOPS. AS FAR AS ORDINARY PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED, WE RANK SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ATHLETE'S FOOT AND CHILD MOLESTERS --

-- EVEN *PROFESSOR X* WAS READY TO SACRIFICE ALL SEVEN OF US --

-- JUST TO SAVE SOME SPOILED, LITTLE WHITE CHICK WITH AN *OLD MONEY* SURNAME.

ACTUALLY, I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE CHARLIE SENT YOU HERE MYSELF.

BACK OFF, MAGNETO.

I DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE, OR WHAT YOU CAN DO.
TAKE ONE MORE STEP TOWARDS MY PEOPLE AND I'LL BURN A HOLE IN YOU LIKE A DOUGHNUT, MISTER.

DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE, CYCLOPS.
YOUR PEOPLE ARE BEING EXECUTED ON THE STREETS OF SO-CALLED CIVILIZED SOCIETY EVERY DAY, AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU TREACHEROUS, LITTLE LAPDOG?

SABOTAGING A SIMPLE KIDNAP PLOT WHICH MIGHT HAVE ENDED THE PRESIDENT'S SENTINEL INITIATIVE AT A STROKE.

HOW COULD YOU COME HERE AND RISK YOUR LIVES TO DEFEND THE STATE-SANCTIONED MURDER OF YOUR *OWN SPECIES?*

DOESN'T IT BRING A TEAR TO YOUR EYE THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE SACRIFICED A *FRIEND* IN YOUR BID TO INGRATIATE YOURSELVES WITH YOUR *PERSECUTORS?*

I WAS DOING THIS FOR *YOU*, YOU LITTLE INGRATES. BUT IT'S OBVIOUS YOU DESERVE EVERYTHING YOU *GET* FROM HOMO SAPIENS.

MY ONLY DESIRE NOW IS THAT THE SENTINELS YOU'VE RISKED EVERYTHING TO RETAIN GIVE YOU A SLOW AND PAINFUL *DEATH.*

LISTEN, THIS ISN'T AS BLACK AND WHITE AS IT *LOOKS*, MAGNETO. WE WEREN'T EXACTLY JUMPING FOR JOY ABOUT COMING HERE *OURSELVES.*

SAVE YOUR BREATH, CYCLOPS. I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY TO INFANTS HELL-BENT ON *SUICIDE.*

JUST *GO.*

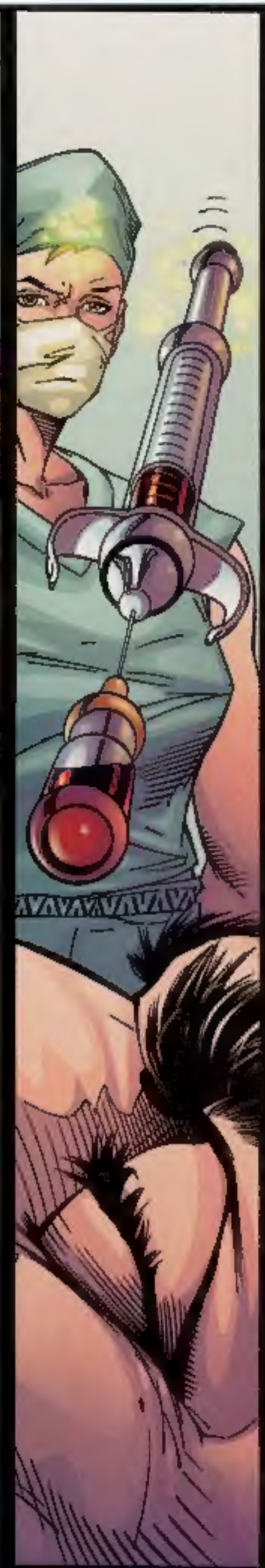
I DONT UNDERSTAND, FATHER.
XAVIER BEING SEPARATED FROM HIS FOLLOWERS LIKE THIS GAVE WOLVERINE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO CATCH HIM ALONE.

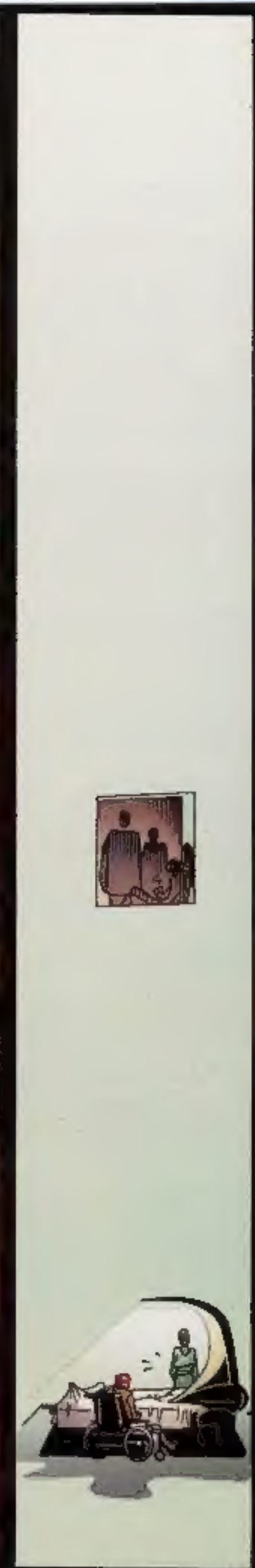
YOU DON'T THINK HE'S LOST HIS MIND AND ALLIED HIMSELF WITH THAT LITTLE BAND OF RENEGADES, DO YOU?
DONT BE SUCH AN IDIOT, SCARLET WITCH.
WOLVERINE ALWAYS GETS THE JOB DONE, AND MURDERING CHARLES WAS SOMETHING HE WAS VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO.

HE'S ONLY DOING WHAT HE DID WHEN I SENT HIM TO KILL THAT LITTLE DESPOT IN THE GULF AND THE CEO OF THAT CORPORATION WHICH WAS PUMPING ALL THAT WRETCHED FILTH INTO THE OCEAN.

YOU KNOW WOLVERINE.
HOLDING OFF ON A KILL JUST MEANS THERE'S A WOMAN HE'S TRYING TO GET INTO BED FIRST.

THE XAVIER INSTITUTE FOR GIFTED CHILDREN
THE XA
FO
GIFTED





I DIDN'T KNOW JEAN AND THE PROFESSOR WERE SURGEONS.
THEY AREN'T, BUT THEY'RE AS QUALIFIED AS ANYONE WITHIN THEIR MIND-READING RADIUS.
FIFTY TIMES AS FAR IF THE PROFESSOR'S MENTAL ABILITIES ARE ENHANCED BY CEREBRO.
THEY CALL IT SOMETHING, BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER THE WORD. BRAIN-STORMING, I THINK
BOBBY'S TAKING THIS VERY BADLY. HE'S LOCKED HIMSELF IN HIS ROOM AND MADE ME PROMISE NOT TO BREAK IN THE DOOR.
IT'S EASY TO FORGET WHAT AGE HE IS, ISN'T IT? I MEAN, WHAT MUST THIS SEEM LIKE WHEN YOU'RE FIFTEEN YEARS OLD?
YOU KNOW THE WORST PART OF IT ALL FOR ME?
THAT SICKENING, GET-RIGHT-UNDER-YOUR-SKIN DETAIL THAT MAKES ME ASHAMED I USED TO CALL MYSELF A HUMAN BEING?
WHAT'S THAT?
I CALLED BEAST'S MOM TO TELL HER WHAT HAPPENED --
-- AND THE BIGOTED OLD WITCH WOULDN'T EVEN TAKE MY CALL.

THE SCHOOL'S INFIRMARY.
HOW'S HE DOING?
SURPRISINGLY WELL, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED
THE INTERNAL DAMAGE HE SUSTAINED WAS GIGANTIC--
--BUT WE FOUND A BIO-TECH TEAM IN SEATTLE ON THE VERGE OF PATENTING A REVOLUTIONARY NEW TRANSPLANT PROCEDURE.
HUMAN TRIALS STILL HAVE TO BE OKAYED BY THE FDA, BUT THE ANIMAL TESTS HAVE BEEN INSANELY SUCCESSFUL.
IN FACT THE ONLY SIDE EFFECT RECORDED WAS A GANG OF AFRICAN SPIDER-MONKEYS WHOSE FUR TURNED NAVY-BLUE AND EVEN THAT ONLY HAPPENED IN LESS THAN ONE PER CENT OF CASES
GOD BLESS THOSE ALTRUISTIC PRIMATES, HUH?

ANY WORD ON WHEN BEAST'S GONNA BE BACK ON HIS FEET?

THE PROFESSOR RECKONS HE SHOULD BE VERTICAL AGAIN IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS, BUT IT'S *CYCLOPS* WHO'S GIVING THE SMART MONEY IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME AT THE MOMENT

DON'T TELL ME HE'S STILL BLAMING *HIMSELF* FOR ALL THIS?

ARE YOU KIDDING? CYCLOPS BLAMES HIMSELF FOR THE HOLE IN THE *OZONE LAYER*, WOLVERINE.

COORDINATING AN OPERATION WHERE ONE OF US ALMOST DIED IS THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN TO AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD *CONTROL FREAK*.

ESPECIALLY WHEN HE DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO *GO* ON THE *MISSION* AND PROFESSOR X TALKED HIM *INTO* IT

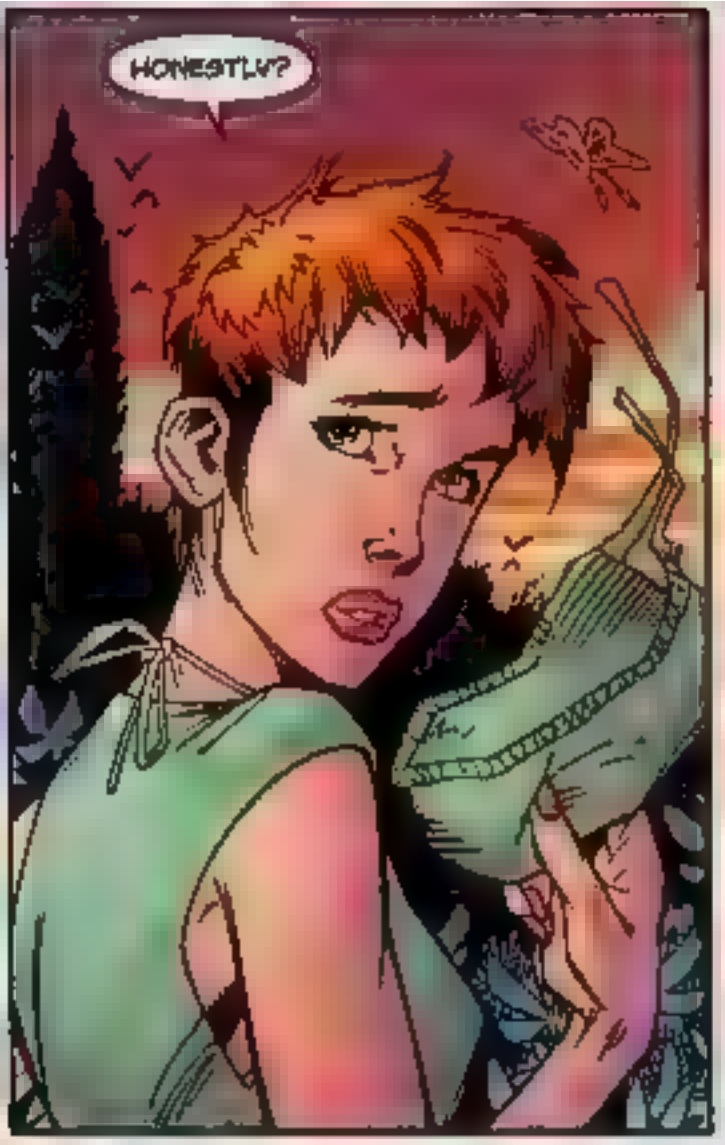
HE FEELS LIKE A FIRST-CLASS *IDIOT*.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? HOW DO *YOU* FEEL?

RATTLED BUT I TRUST THE PROFESSOR, AND THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON IS THAT THE PRESIDENT'S FEELING HIGHLY CONCILIATORY SINCE HE GOT HIS *DAUGHTER* BACK.

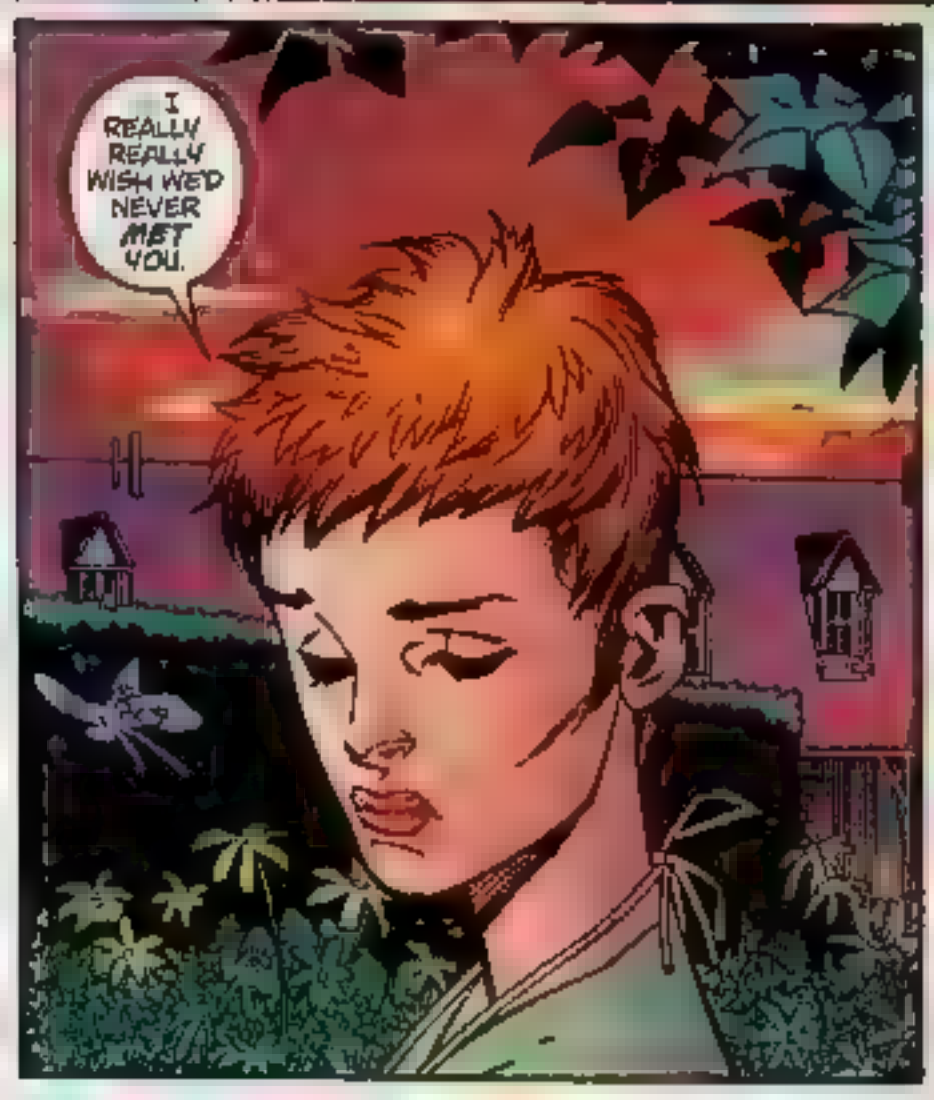
THE PROFESSOR EXPECTS A SUSPENSION OF THE SENTINEL PROGRAM IN THE NEXT SIXTY TO NINETY *MINUTES*.

NO, JEAN. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT *ME*?


HONESTLY?

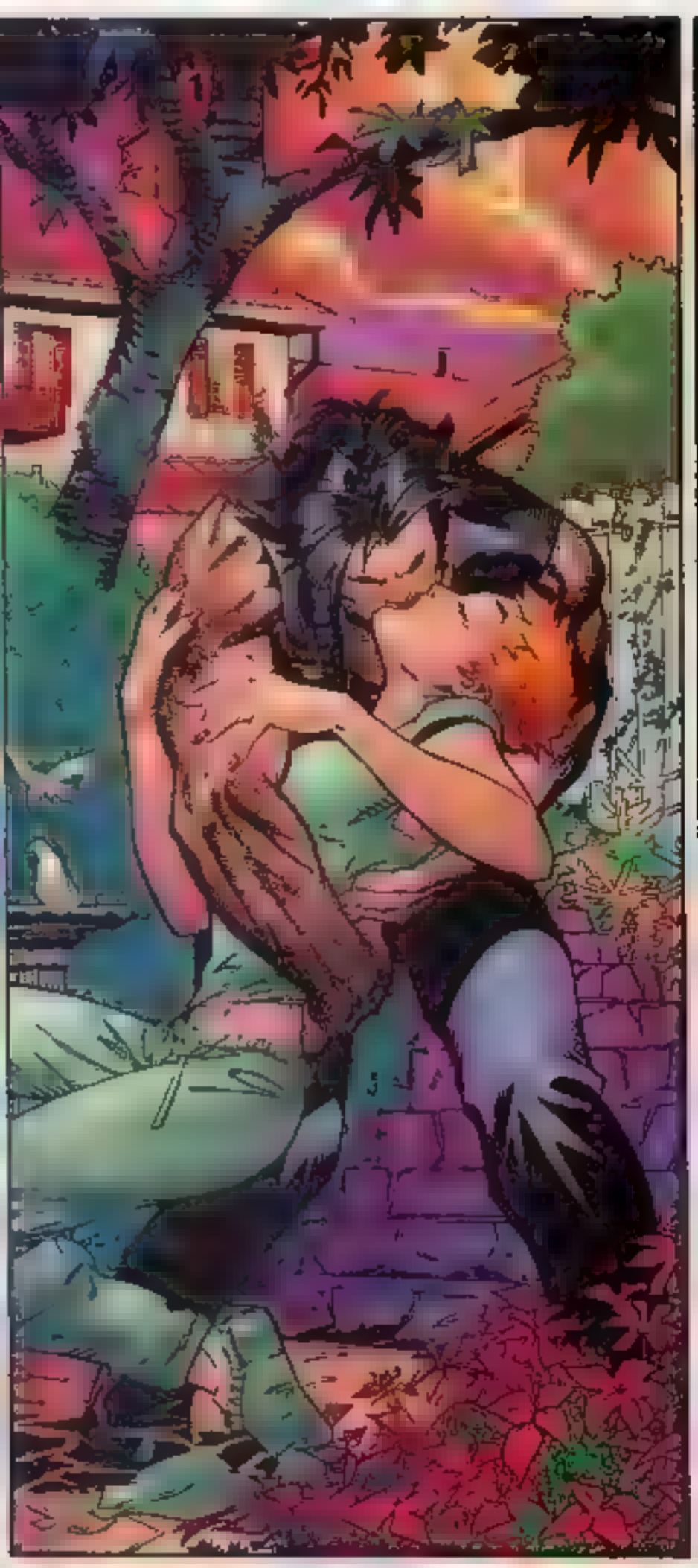
I'M NOT SURE I PARTICULARLY *LIKE* YOU, WOLVERINE.
SURE, YOU'VE PROVED YOURSELF AS AN X-MAN, BUT I HAVEN'T *BOUGHT* THIS IDEA THAT YOU'RE AN OVERNIGHT CONVERT TO PROFESSOR XAVIER'S INTEGRATIONIST IDEOLOGY.

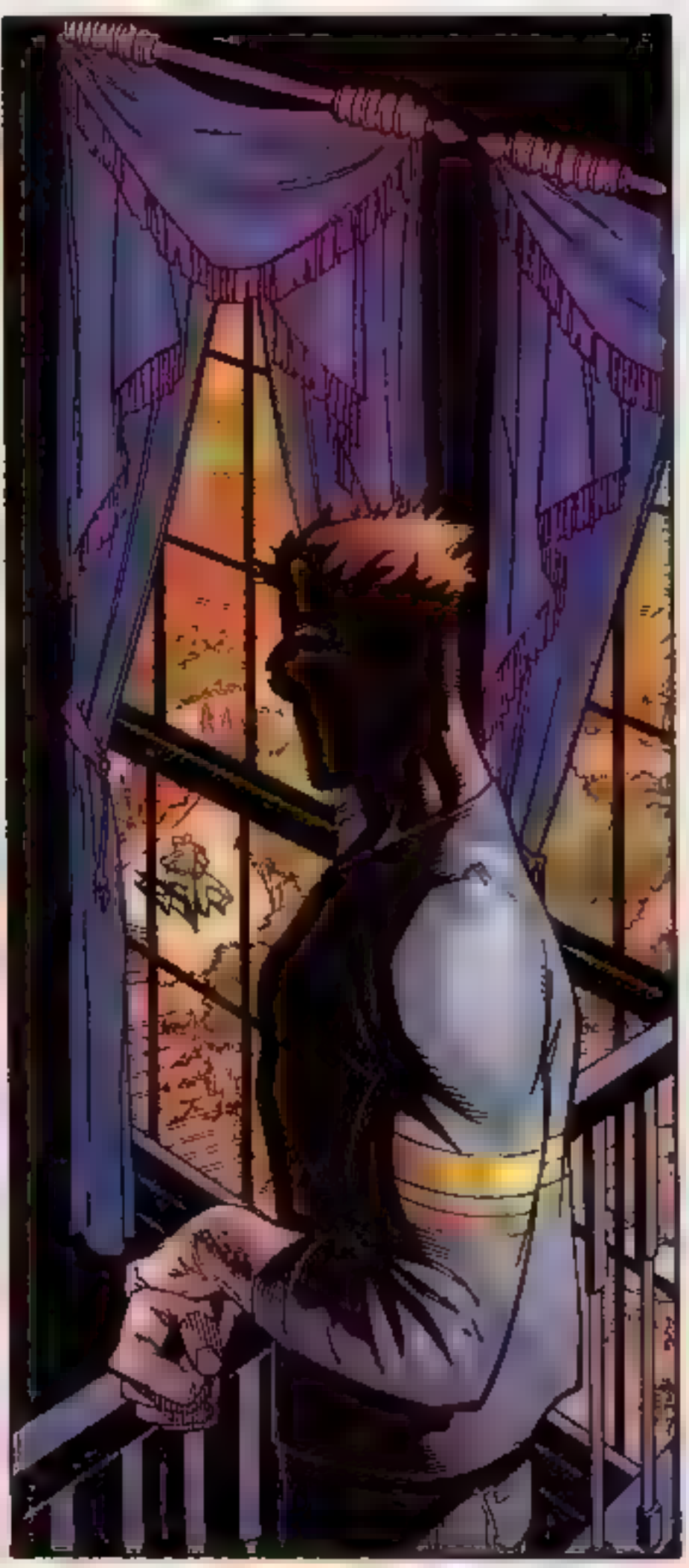
YOUR WEAPON X TRAINING MIGHT MEAN I CAN'T READ THE THOUGHTS YOU DON'T *WANT* ME TO, BUT I'M EMPATHIC ENOUGH TO KNOW YOU'RE HERE FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS.
I THINK THE WAY PEOPLE HAVE TREATED YOU OVER THE YEARS HAS REALLY SCREWED YOU UP, AND AS MUCH AS IT GOES AGAINST EVERYTHING THE SCHOOL'S SUPPOSED TO STAND FOR --

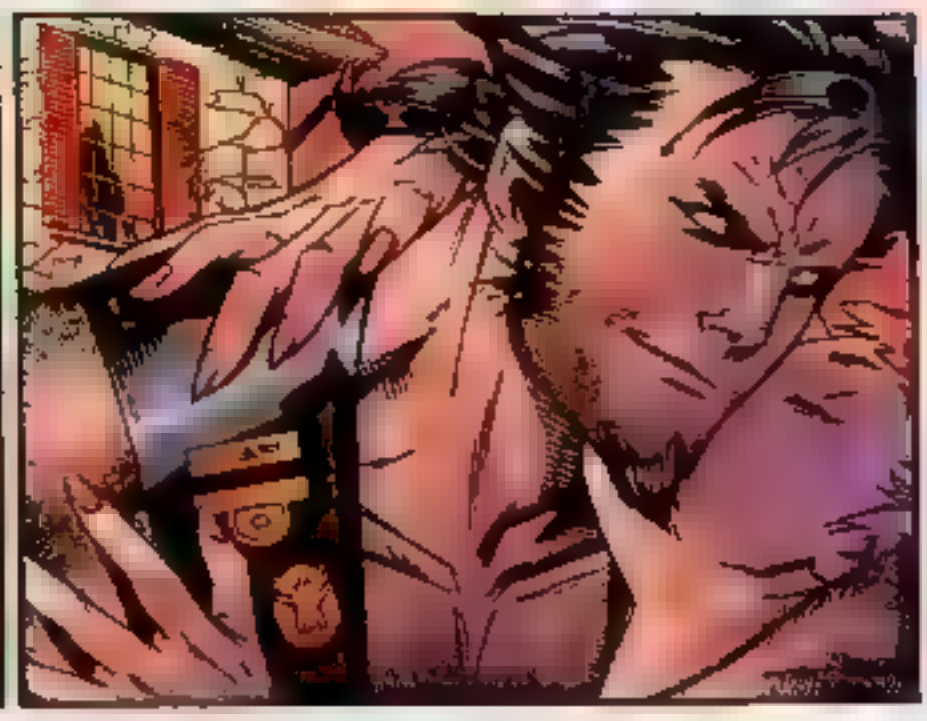

I REALLY REALLY WISH WE'D NEVER *MET* YOU.

SO HOW COME YOU FIND ME SO *ATTRACTIVE?*

I WISH I KNEW.







THE VIEWING ROOM
ACTUALLY, I'M ASTONISHED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS SUSPENDED THE SENTINELS, BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT KIND OF POLITICAL PRESSURE HE WAS UNDER TO MAINTAIN A TOUGH LINE.
BUT TELL HIM I'M DELIGHTED BY HIS DECISION, AND PLEASED TO HAVE PLAYED A PART IN THE SAFE RETURN OF HIS DAUGHTER.
MY X-MEN AND I WOULD BE HONORED TO ACCEPT HIS INVITATION TO THE WHITE HOUSE AND HOPE THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A LONG FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP
LAYING IT ON A BIT THICK, AREN'T YOU, PROFESSOR?
WOULD YOU EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT, MS. RICE? ONE OF MY STUDENTS APPEARS TO BE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH HIS HOMEWORK
IN YOUR OWN TIME, PROFESSOR XAVIER. WE'LL JUST BE SITTING HERE RUNNING THE COUNTRY IF YOU NEED US

PLANNING A *TRIP*, CYCLOPS?

YEAH, A ONE WAY TICKET *OUT* OF HERE.

THIS BIG PLAN YOU HAD IS OBVIOUSLY GOING NOWHERE, AND I'M LEAVING BEFORE ANYONE *ELSE* GETS BLOWN UP FOR YOUR USELESS CAUSE.

WE'RE HARDLY GOING *NOWHERE*, SCOTT. I'VE JUST ARRANGED THE FIRST [redacted] NEGOTIATED A SUSPENSION OF THE *SENTINEL* PROGRAM, FOR GOD'S SAKE.

YOU MEAN WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GRATEFUL BECAUSE THE TEKAN'S GIVEN US A TEMPORARY STAY OF EXECUTION?

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN GETTING A FEW SCRAPS FROM THEIR TABLE ANYMORE, MAN.

I JUST WANT THE SAME RIGHTS AS EVERYBODY ELSE.

BUT YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT THIS FROM *THEIR* PERSPECTIVE, CYCLOPS: A NEW RACE HAS EMERGED, BOMBED THEIR CITIES AND DECLARED THEY'RE HERE TO *REPLACE* THEM.

THE SENTINELS WERE AN OBVIOUS KNEE-JERK REACTION. BUT GETTING EVERYONE AROUND THE *NEGOTIATING* TABLE WAS OUR OBJECTIVE FROM [redacted]

WHY SHOULD WE SIT DOWN AND NEGOTIATE WITH THE KIND OF SCUM THAT PUT HENRY McCOY IN A COMA?

BECAUSE THEY'RE *HUMAN BEINGS*, CYCLOPS. AND WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE SHARING THIS PLANET WITH SIX BILLION OF THEM.

MAGNETO'S IDEAS FOR A NEW AND BETTER WORLD ARE ATTRACTIVE TO *ANY* YOUNG MUTANT BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT HIS REMAINS THE SINGLE, GREATEST THREAT TO OUR FRAGILE PEACE PROCESS.

AS MUCH AS I TREASURE ALL FORMS OF LIFE, I WOULDN'T *HESITATE* TO SWITCH OFF HIS BRAIN IF IT WASN'T FOR THE THOUGHT-PROOF *HELMET* HE WEARS TO PROTECT HIMSELF.

THE OTHERS LOOK UP TO YOU. SCOTT YOU LEAVING NOW WOULD HAVE A DISASTROUS EFFECT AT SUCH A PIVOTAL STAGE IN MY PLANS.

WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM AND UNPACK, AND WE'LL SAY NOTHING ELSE ABOUT THIS UNFORTUNATE LITTLE EPISODE, EH?

PROFESSOR...ARE YOU DOING SOMETHING TO MY *MIND*?

JUST RELEASING A PLEASANT HORMONE INTO YOUR BLOODSTREAM TO CALM THOSE *RISING TEMPERS*, MY FRIEND.

WE WERE ABOUT TO EXCHANGE SIX VERY UNPLEASANT SENTENCES, AND I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT A REASONABLE BOY LIKE YOU COULDN'T *POSSIBLY* MEAN THE FIFTH ONE.

CAN YOU READ WHAT I'M THINKING *NOW*, PROFESSOR?

LANGUAGE LIKE *THAT* BETRAYS A LIMITED VOCABULARY, CYCLOPS.

WELL, RIGHT NOW I'M FEELING *MONOSYLLABIC*, MAN.

GIVE ME A CALL WHEN YOU GET TIRED OF SUCKING UP TO THE *EVIL EMPIRE*.

BEAST TO ALL AVAILABLE X-MEN. I REPEAT, THIS IS BEAST CALLING ANY X-MEN CURRENTLY ON THE PREMISES --

WOULD SOMEBODY COME ALONG TO THE INFIRMARY AND EXPLAIN WHY I'VE SUDDENLY GOT *BLUE HAIR*?

THE SAVAGE LAND.

OKAY, MAGNETO. I'M INTERESTED.
LET'S HEAR WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO SAY FOR YOURSELF.

WELCOME TO THE SAVAGE LAND, BROTHER CYCLOPS.
TO BE CONTINUED